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MISSOURI MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES IN FEDERAL COURT

Man tried to entice 14-year old girl to engage in sexual conduct

Shreveport, Louisiana . . . United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced that MICHAEL J. LINES, age 56, of Union, Missouri, pleaded guilty before United States District Judge S. Maurice Hicks, Jr. to attempted sexual exploitation of children and possession of child pornography. Sentencing has been set for June 20, 2007.

An indictment in the Western District of Louisiana was filed in August 2006 charging LINES with one count of attempted sexual exploitation of children, one count of attempted coercion and enticement, and one count of travel with intent to engage in illicit sexual conduct with a minor. Testimony at the hearing established that between July 6, 2006 and July 28, 2006, LINES engaged in online chats over the Internet with an undercover agent who was posing as a 14-year female in Bossier City. During the chats, LINES offered to purchase a bus ticket for the 14-year old girl to travel from Bossier City to Missouri so that he could take pornographic pictures of her. When the girl declined his invitation, he offered to travel to Bossier City. When he arrived at the house to meet the girl, he was arrested by federal, state, and local, agents.

An indictment was also filed in the Eastern District of Missouri in December 2006 charging one count of possession of child pornography. The testimony at the hearing established that contemporaneous to LINES' arrest in Bossier City, federal, state, and local agents executed a federal search warrant at LINES' residence in Union City, Missouri. The agents seized computer hardware and software. Subsequent examination of the seized items revealed child pornography. This case was transferred to the Western District of Louisiana for disposition pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 20 and agreement by the parties.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who

exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

LINES faces a minimum of 15 years and a maximum of 30 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on the attempted child exploitation charge, and up to 10 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on the child pornography possession charge. Sentencing in federal court is determined by the discretion of federal judges and the governing statute. Parole has been abolished in the federal system.

This case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Shreveport Resident Agency and the Northwest Louisiana Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl M. Campbell.

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